



# CATAWBA COUNTY

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Department of Social Services

## PRESS RELEASE/PSA

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Summer Child Safety Reminder

From 2002 through 2006, 941 fatalities have occurred as a result of children being left unattended in or around motor vehicles. Of these fatalities, 19.6% were due to hyperthermia, the result of a child being left in a hot car. As the weather heats up, it's important to remember that it's never safe to leave children unattended in a motor vehicle and it is especially dangerous during warmer months.

Even on a mild day in the 70's, the interior of a car can quickly reach temperatures that can result in heat exhaustion or heat stroke which can cause permanent disability or death. Heat stroke can occur when the core body temperature reaches 104 degree F. A core body temperature of 107 degrees F is considered lethal. The body of child can warm at a rate of 3 to 5 times faster than an adult because their thermoregulatory system is not as efficient. Below is a chart that estimates the amount of time it takes for a car to reach extreme temperatures.

Outside Temperature	Temperature in Car	Time it Takes to Reach
75	100	10 minutes
75	120	30 minutes
85	90	5 minutes
85	100	7 – 10 minutes
85	120	30 minutes
100	140	15 minutes

Research shows that the most common circumstance that led to a child fatality due to hyperthermia in a motor vehicle is that the child was forgotten by the caregiver, followed by a child playing unattended and a child being intentionally left in the vehicle. This type of tragedy can easily be prevented, and we hope that with some awareness, we can avoid such a tragedy in Catawba County this year.

There are some simple strategies that can reduce this type of risk. First and foremost, never leave a child unattended in a car, not even with the windows open or in the shade. Make sure that all children exit the vehicle when you reach your destination – don't forget the sleeping infant in the back seat! Keep your car and trunk locked at all times, even in the garage or driveway, and make sure the keys are where children cannot get to them. Finally, teach children not to play in or around cars.

For more information on how to keep your children safe, visit [www.kidsincars.org](http://www.kidsincars.org).